MATERIALS FOR THE STUDY OF THE WORK AND THOUGHT

OF ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE

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THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF PANISLAMISM

by Arnold J. Toynbee

The remarkable success of the core of the Islamic World in preserving or regaining its freedom from alien political control during the 270 years that had elapsed between A.D. 1683 and A.D. 1952[1] was, no doubt, one explanation of the equally remarkable miss-fire of a nineteenth-century Panislamic Movement that was the response which the Muslims might have been expected to make to the challenge of an increasing Western and Russian pressure upon them. The nineteenth-century Muslims to whom the Panislamic programme of strength through solidarity made an appeal were those outlying Muslim communities that did lose their independence in this age.

Both the local Ottoman dominant minority and the Arab and Berber subject majority of the population in Algeria, Tunisia, and Tripolitania, for example, reversed their attitude towards the Ottoman Empire after the initiation in A.D. 1830 of the French conquest of the Maghrib. During the preceding two centuries or so, the ruling element in the Ottoman Barbary States had been bent on asserting its *de facto* independence of the Porte; from A.D. 1830 onwards both the anti-French resistance movement in Algeria and the local Ottoman regime in the now likewise threatened adjoining Ottoman principality of Tunisia began to look to the Porte for support against French aggression. In A.D. 1864 the reigning Bey of Tunis sought to strengthen his ties with the Porte by sending on a mission to Constantinople the Circassian slave-statesman Khayr-ad-Dīn, who published in A.D. 1867 a book advocating the adoption of Westernizing reforms by Muslim countries as a means towards their

[1] See pp. 219-32 [*A Study of History*, vol. 8, Part IX, B, 2 (*a*), *The Modern West and the Islamic World*, pp. 216-272, *The Postponement of the Crisis*, pp. 219-232], above.

becoming more competent to hold their own against Western imperialism[2]. A further move in the same direction was made by the Tunisian Government in A.D. 1871[3].

From the opposite extremity of the Islamic World, similar embassies from Central Asian Turkish Muslim rulers, soliciting the help of the Porte against Russian imperialism, began to arrive at Constantinople in the seventh decade of the nineteenth century, after the Russians had begun to direct their military energies from the by then all but completed conquest of the Caucasus to the conquest of Central Asia[4]. In A.D. 1863 a Western traveller in Central Asia found that Central Asian khans were taking pride and comfort in being invested with honorary offices in the Ottoman Pādishāh's household[5]; and from A.D. 1869 onwards there were contacts between the Porte and Ya'qūb Beg, the Turkī Muslim rebel against Manchu rule in the Tarim Basin. From A.D. 1873 onwards Ya'qūb caused the Pādishāh's name to be inscribed on his coinage and invoked in the *Khutbah* within his dominions, and an Ottoman mission made its way from Constantinople to his headquarters. Envoys from Afghanistan and from the Panthai Muslim rebels against Manchu rule in Yunnan also presented themselves, on similar errands, at the court of Sultan 'Abd-al-'Azīz (*imperabat* A.D. 1861-76), and in A.D. 1873 he received an appeal from the Achinese Muslims in Sumatra for help against the aggression of the Dutch.

A sentimental attachment to an idealised conception of the Ottoman Empire began to appear about the same time among the Muslim diasporà — Shī'ī as well as Sunnī — in India, as a psychological compensation for the loss of their own former imperial dominion over a Hindu majority of the population of the sub-continent and for the painfully overwhelming

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[2] Khayr-ad-Din Pasha: Muqaddamat Kitab Aqrwam al-Masalik fi Ma'rifat Awal al-Mamalik, first published in Arabic in a.d. 1867 and in a French translation, under the title Réformes Nécessaires aux États Musulmans, in a.d. 1868. The writer of this *Study* possesses a copy of the second French edition (Paris 1875, Dentu) and of an Arabic edition published at Constantinople in a.h. 1293 (a.d. 1876) at the Jevā'ib ("News") Press.

[3] See Davison, Roderic H.: *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (thesis submitted to Harvard University for the Degree of Ph.D., 1st April, 1942), pp. 263-5 and 349. [The author had kindly permitted the writer of this *Study* to read and cite a typescript copy of this still unpublished work which was deposited in the Library of Harvard University].

[4] See Davison, op. cit., pp. 343-7.

[5] See Vambéry, A.: *Travels in Central Asia, 1863* (London 1864, Murray), pp. 434-5.

service which the subsequent British conquerors of India had done for these local Muslim predecessors of theirs in saving them from the vengeance of the resurgent Hindus by imposing an impartial British Rāj on both these Indian communities.

The Ottoman Empire was, indeed, the only political rallying point on which the Muslim victims of Western and Russian imperialism could fall back — not so much in virtue of her dubious and long-neglected title to the inheritance of the Caliphate as because, even in her nineteenth-century infirmity, she was by far and away the most powerful, efficient, and enlightened Muslim state in existence. At the same time, her patent weakness in this age by comparison with the encircling non-Muslim Powers made it an embarrassment rather than an opportunity for her to find herself the cynosure of nineteenth-century Muslim eyes. Out of fear of France, she forbore from making any serious response to Tunisian overtures to her between the date of the French descent on Algeria in A.D. 1830 and the date of the long-dreaded establishment of a French protectorate over Tunisia in A.D. 1881, and she was quite impotent to help the Caucasian and Central Asian Muslims in their desperate struggle to resist the imposition on them of a Russian yoke. All that the Porte could do was to take a modest advantage of the revulsion of Maghribī feeling in her favour by establishing her direct rule over Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in A.D. 1835 and to salve her conscience for her inability to assist the Maghribī and Caucasian resistance movements in the field by giving new homes in still intact Ottoman territory to Algerian and Circassian "displaced persons" after their struggles to maintain their independence had ended in an inevitable ultimate defeat.

Thus Panislamism fell between two stools. On the one hand neither the Ottoman Empire nor, *a fortiori*, any other still independent Muslim state was capable in the nineteenth century of the Christian Era of constituting itself into an effective agency for vindicating the integrity and independence of the Islamic World as a whole, while on the other hand the fact that all but a few fragments of the core of the Islamic World had succeeded in remaining independent on a low level of vitality took the edge off the appeal of the Panislamic gospel of self-preservation through an increase of inter-Islamic solidarity. If, in the course of the nineteenth century, the whole of the Islamic World, instead of a few fragments and fringes,

had been engulfed in the British, French, and Russian empires, the nineteenth-century apostle of Panislamism, the Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn[6] al-Afghānī (*vivebat circa* A.D. 1838-A.D. 1897)[7], might have found a more favourable mission-field for his propaganda.

Jamāl ad-Dīn's message to his fellow Muslims was twofold. They were to defend themselves against the West in the first place by transcending their own traditional sectarian and political divisions and rallying round the Ottoman Pādishāh as Caliph, and in the second place by adopting Western ideas, institutions, and techniques that were the secret of the Modern's West's strength[8]; and it is significant that the Sayyid was far more successful in his advocacy of the second of these two prescriptions. In his preaching of Islamic solidarity he was, it is true, unprecedentedly successful in gaining a following among Sunnīs and Shī'īs alike. In a Sunnī Egypt he was the inspiration of Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, and in a Shī'ī Persia he moved the mujtahids in A.D. 1891-2 to crush Nāsir-ad-Dīn Shāh's attempt to grant a tobacco monopoly to a group of British *entrepreneurs*. Yet the chief practical effect of his missionary work was to promote the birth of a parochial nationalist movement in Egypt and a parochial nationalist movement in Persia, and thereby to create new, and perhaps insurmountable, obstacles to the political unification of the Islamic World under the aegis of a universal state crystallizing round the nineteenth-century torso of the Ottoman Empire. In so far as Jamāl al-Dīn's Ottoman admirer and patron Sultan 'Abd-al-Hamīd II (*imperabat* A.D.

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[6] Accounts of the Sayyid Jamal-ad-Din's career and ideas will be found in Browne, E. G.: *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge 1910, University Press), pp. 1-30, and in an article by Goldziher, I.: s.v. *Djamā al-Dīn al-Afghāni*, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 1 (Leyden 1913, Brill), pp. 1008-11.

[7] According to Browne, op. cit., p. 4, the As'adābād which was Jamāl-ad-Dīn's birthplace was probably not the place of that name near Kabūl, which was claimed as his birthplace by the Sayyid himself, but the As'adābād near Hamadan, as asserted by Nāzim-al-Islām of Kīrmān in his *Ta'rīkh-i-Bīdāri-i-Īranīyan*. If so, the Sayyid was born a Shī'ī and a subject of the Shah of Persia.

[8] The Panislamic strategy of resistance to Western aggression against the Islamic World could, of course, be combined equally well with either Herodian or Zealot tactics. As an example of a Zealot-minded exponent of Panislamism we may cite the North Caucasian Panislamic leader the Amīr Shaykh Uzun Hajjī Khayr Khan, who was active in A.D. 1919. 'Uzun Hajji was distinguished by simplicity and directness, as much as by his fanaticism. «I am twisting a rope in order to hang all engineers, students and, in general, people who write from left to right». These words of Uzun Hajjī's..." [*sic*] (Arshurani, A., and Habidullin (?Habibullin], Kh.: *Ocherki Panislamizma i Pantyurkizma v Rossii* [*Studies in Panislamism and Panturkism in Russia*] (Moscow 1931, Bezbozhnik [Ami-religious] Press), p. 67, communicated to the writer by B.H. Sumner).

1876-1909) tried to translate the Sayyid's ideas into practice, he largely stultified the Sayyid's intentions by seeking in Panislamism a political prop for the declining strength of Turkey rather than attempting to use Turkey's residual strength as a pillar for the support of Panislamism[9].

The inference from this aftermath of Jamāl ad-Dīn's career seems to be that the nineteenth-century Western and Russian pressure on the heart of the Islamic World was not sufficiently severe to make the still unsubjugated Muslim peoples feel that Western nationalism was a luxury in which they could not afford to indulge. In any case it is an historical fact that the still independent Islamic peoples Westernized piecemeal, like the Ottoman Orthodox Christian peoples, instead of Westernizing *en bloc*, like Russian Orthodox Christendom, within the political framework of a universal state.

[9] 'Abd-al-Hamīd's exploitation of the Ottoman Caliphate has been touched upon in [*A Study of History*], [Part VI], [vol.] vii, [1954], [pp.] 22-24.